1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
O120 Tiwi O120

in the party who carried only ordinary ones. The painted spears were symbols of wealth and status and roughly corresponded to white tie and tails in our culture. No important man could afford not to have them, even though for most of the year they were unused. Before leaving home on a journey, it was often necessary for a man to renew the paint on his spears, for it rubbed off easily. Since paint was an aspect of ritual, its use, even the renewal of old paint, was senior men's prerogative; women were not supposed to touch it.[8] The analogy with formal dress even extended to the borrowing of ceremonial spears. An important man, caught short of them, might borrow some from a contemporary who had plenty, and though everybody would know that his spears were borrowed, he at least was properly dressed for the occasion, though stark naked otherwise.

Baskets made of bark with gummed sides were made by the women, but the painted designs upon these baskets were applied by the men, in line with their monopoly on all work that required paint. These baskets of various sizes but little variation in shape were used for all domestic tasks involving the collection, storing, transporting, and preparing of vegetable foods, and were sufficiently watertight to enable water also to be carried in them. Ordinary wooden spears (without barbs or painted designs) and a great variety of throwing sticks were made by all men, young or old, but important old men bothered with them very little, considering such routine manufacture beneath them. These workaday spears and throwing sticks lay around every camp in abundance, and a man who needed spears or sticks in a hurry could always gather up a bundle in a few minutes. Small boys picked up the techniques of making spears and throwing sticks by spending time with older boys who in turn improved their skill both in making and using hunting weapons by spending time with the local young men.

Although much of this learning was fairly random, other instruction was not. During his initiation period a youth spent long intervals isolated in the bush with a couple of older teachers from whom he received training in religious and ritual matters. At the same time, of course, it was inevitable that the novice absorb some of the older men's experience in bushcraft. There was no corresponding initiation period for girls. What they learned, they learned first from the older women of their childhood household and later from the older women of the husband's household into which they moved as child-brides after puberty. In all households the supervision by the elderly women of all younger women included the training of both female children and young wives in the things all females should know—things which were mostly concerned with collecting and preparing vegetable foods and the making of baskets.

In pre-white times Tiwi males wore no clothing whatever. The Mission insisted on calico loincloths, but, at least in the 1928-29 period, one could

[8] Female mourners were required to daub their bodies with white clay as a sign of mourning, but this paint was smeared haphazardly over their bodies and faces without any attempt at regularity or design, in contrast to the careful paint designs on the men's bodies.

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
OI20 Tiwi OI20

Pl. 10A pictures Mundinju, the place where the two sisters, *Wilinduels* and *Numanirakala* camped before the former made her home at Wilindu, and the latter at Numanira. 532x 778

The central black disc is Mundinju; the smaller black discs, throughout the painting, are holes in the cliffs from which seep streams of fresh water. The long, radiating panels are bands of red and yellow ochres in the cliffs, the groups of parallel lines, gutters formed in the cliffs, where *Wilinduels* urinated; and the groups of chevron designs, ferns growing among the rocks.

The Red-ochre Woman, Numanirakala, at Numanira

Numanira, created by *Numanirakala*, is a partly submerged reef a short distance from Wulrungku (Karslake Island), north-western Melville Island. 778

At low tide, the aborigines collect one of the best ochres in the country from this locality, even better than that from Imilu (Fig. 1), for, although Imilu ochres are brightest when used dry, those from Numanira are best when mixed with water. [317]

The central design on Pl. 12B indicates the flat rocks of the submerged totemic place at Numanira, while similar designs, above and below, are other rocks near by. The darker-coloured segments in these three designs indicate the red ochre, and the lighter segments the mud on the sea bottom. The white circles represent sea-weed, the darker, small rocks under the water, and the dots, the corals growing on those rocks. 532x 778

The central black disc of Pl. 12D is Numanira; the surrounding white circle, the sand on the sea floor, and the narrow darker line on the periphery, the red ochre, for which the island is noted.

The radiating black panels symbolize clams, the lighter panels, oysters, both of which are plentiful on the rocks of the island. The outer circle is the mud, and the dots are bunches of weed on the sea-bottom.

The Spider-woman, Baraka, at Rungani

During *pulameri* times, the spider-woman, *Baraka*, who lived at Rungani, made a bark basket for the *pukamuni* of *Purukupali*. She first stripped a sheet of bark from a eucalyptus tree, heated it over the fire to make it flexible, then, bending it double, sewed the edges together with split lawyer vine. From that day until now, the women of Melville and Bathurst Islands have made their baskets in the same manner. After the *pukamuni* of *Purukupali*, *Tukindini* instructed his wife, *Baraka*, to establish a totemic place at Rungani, northern Melville Island. 773 285 [462] 773

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
OI20 Tiwi OI20

411 412 (f) The aborigines of Melville and Bathurst Islands have a particularly limited material culture. They have only double-ended, or simple wooden barbed spears, which they throw by hand as one would throw a javelin. This form of propulsion contrasts strongly with the mainland, where the use of the spear-thrower is universal. Nor do the Tiwi use any small mounted stone tools. Before the advent of steel, their only cutting tool was a cockle-shell, held in the hand. It is likely that until about fifty years ago, until Joe [177] Cooper brought the mainland aborigines, with their polished stone axes, to Melville Island, the Tiwi possessed only a crudely flaked stone axe, mounted in a length of split wood with the gum of a eucalyptus tree. In addition, all of [415] the Tiwi carrying utensils are made of bark, because the Islanders lack the [285] knowledge of any form of basketry or of the netting techniques.

105 171 It is evident, then, that within the range of the research I was able to undertake, there are many differences between the culture of the Tiwi and that of the aborigines of the nearby mainland. There is little doubt that Miss Goodale's research, when published, will reveal further dissimilarities.[66]

123 My research, however, must be considered only as a preliminary study, within the limits of the subjects enumerated. Lack of transport prevented me from visiting any of the totemic sites, and limited time from investigating more fully other aspects of their beliefs.

It is my sincere hope that this study will be continued by another ethnologist before civilization has distorted or destroyed the interesting cultural life of the Tiwi.

[66] Since the writing of this book, Chaseling has referred (1957, p. 170) to a female ancestor (unnamed) who created much of the mainland side of Dundas Strait. This information would suggest that Melville Island and the adjacent mainland are more closely linked mythologically, and perhaps culturally, than the evidence in this book suggests. Further research on this subject will be awaited with interest.

[114] [173]